

Sermons of John Newton

Based on Scripture Passages
Used in Handel's 'Messiah' Part 2

Booklet Twelve

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27. Messiah the Son of God - Hebrews 1:5
28. Messiah Worshipped By Angels - Hebrews 1:6

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27. Messiah the Son of God and 28. Messiah Worshipped By Angels

27. Messiah the Son of God

“For to which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee?” Hebrews 1:5.

Though every part of a revelation from God must of course be equally true, there may be a considerable difference even among truths proposed by the same authority, with respect to their immediate importance. There are fundamental truths, the knowledge of which are essentially necessary to our peace and holiness: and there are others of a secondary nature, which, though very useful in their proper connection, and though the right apprehension of them is greatly conducive to the comfort and establishment of a believer; are not so necessary, but that he may be a true believer before he clearly understands them. Thus our Lord pronounced Peter, “Blessed” (Matthew 16:17), for his acknowledgment of a truth, which had been revealed to him, not by flesh and blood, but from above, though he was at that time very deficient in doctrinal knowledge. It is not easy to draw the line here, and precisely to distinguish between fundamental and secondary truths; yet some attention to this distinction is expedient; and the want of this attention has greatly attributed to foment and embittered controversies in the Church of Christ; while fallible men, from a mistaken zeal for the faith once delivered to the saints, have laboured to enforce all their religious sentiments, with an equal and indiscriminate vehemence. It is evident that the truths essential to the very being of a Christian, must be known, and experienced by all, of every nation, people and language, who are taught of God (Isaiah 54:13). For they, and they only, are Christians indeed, who are thus taught. And therefore it seems to follow, that no doctrine, however true in itself, which humble and spiritual persons who study the Scripture with prayer, and really depend upon divine teaching, are not agreed in, can be strictly

fundamental. And perhaps the chief part of the apparent diversity of their sentiments, does not so often respect the truth itself, as the different acceptation they put upon the words and phrases, by which they endeavour to express their meaning to each other.

However, if there be any doctrine fundamental and necessary to be rightly understood, what the Scripture teaches concerning the person of MESSIAH the Redeemer, must be eminently so. Mistakes upon this point, must necessarily be dangerous. It cannot be a question of mere speculation, whether the Saviour be God, or creature. He must be either the one or the other. And the whole frame of our religion is unavoidably dependant upon the judgment we form of Him. If he be a man only, or if he be an angel, though of the highest order, and possessed of excellencies peculiar to himself; still upon the supposition that he is but a creature, he must be infinitely inferior to his Maker, in comparison of whose immensity the difference between an angel and a worm is annihilated. Then all they who pay divine worship to Jesus, who love Him above all, trust Him with all their concerns for time and eternity, and address Him in the language of Thomas, "My Lord, and my God," (John 20:28), are involved in the gross and heinous crime of idolatry, by ascribing to Him that glory which the great God has declared "He will not give to another" (Isaiah 42:8). On the contrary, if He be God over all, blessed for ever, Jehovah, the LORD of hosts, then they who refuse Him the honour due His name, "worship they know not what" (John 4:22). For there is but one God; and according to this plan, they who know Him not in Christ, know Him not at all, but are "without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12). The judgment we form of the Saviour demonstrates, likewise, how far we know ourselves. For it may be fairly presumed, that they who think a creature capable of making atonement for their sins, or of sustaining the office of shepherd and bishop of their souls, have too slight thoughts both of the evil of sin, and of the weakness and wickedness of the human heart.

We ascribe it, therefore, to the wisdom and goodness of God, that a doctrine so important, the very pillar and ground of truth, is not asserted once, or in a few places of Scripture only. It does not depend upon texts which require a nice skill in criticism, or a

collation of ancient manuscripts, to settle their sense; but, like the blood of the animal economy, it pervades and enlivens the whole system of revelation. The books of Moses, the Psalms, and the prophets, all testify of Him, who was styled the Son of God in so peculiar a sense, that the Apostle, in this passage, considers it as a sufficient proof that He is by nature superior to all creatures. The form of the question implies the strongest assertion of this superiority; as if He had said, Conceive of the highest and most exalted of the angels, it would be absurd to suppose that God would say to him, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee."

The verse contains three terms which require explanation. "My Son," "Begotten," and "This Day." But who is sufficient for these things? If I attempt to explain them, I wish to speak with caution and with modesty becoming the sense I ought to have of my own weakness, and to keep upon safe ground; lest instead of elucidating so sublime a subject, I should darken counsel by words without knowledge. And, in these enquiries, I know of no safe ground to go upon but the sure testimony of Scripture. It would be improper to the last degree to indulge flights of imagination, or a spirit of curiosity, or conjecture upon this occasion. Those are the deep things of God. in which if we have not the guidance of His Word and Spirit, we shall certainly bewilder ourselves. Nor would I speak in a positive dogmatizing strain. At the same time I trust the Scripture will afford light sufficient, to preserve us from a cold and comfortless uncertainty.

The gracious design of God in affording us His holy Scripture, is to "make us wise unto salvation" (2 Timothy 3:15). His manner of teaching is therefore accommodated to our circumstances. He instructs in heavenly things by earthly. And to engage our confidence, to excite our gratitude, to animate us to our duty by the most affecting motives; and that the reverence we owe to His great and glorious Majesty, as our Creator and our Legislator, may be combined with love and cheerful dependence; He is pleased to reveal Himself by those names which express the nearest relation and endearment amongst ourselves. Thus He condescends to style Himself the Father, the Husband, and the Friend of His people. But

though in this way we are assisted in forming our conceptions of His love, compassion, and faithfulness, it is obvious that these names, when applied to Him, must be understood in a sense agreeable to the perfections of His nature, and in many respects different from the meaning they bear amongst men. And thus, when we are informed that God has a Son, it is our part to receive His testimony, to admire and adore; and for an explanation adapted to our profit and comfort, we are to consult, not our own preconceived ideas, but the further declarations of His Word, comparing spiritual things with spiritual, attending to His instructions with the simplicity of children, and avoiding, as much as possible, those vain reasonings, upon points above our comprehension, which, though flattering to the pride of our hearts, are sure to indispose us for the reception of divine truth. A distinction of the Divine Nature inconceivable by us, but plainly revealed in terms, must be admitted upon the testimony and authority of Him who alone can instruct us in what we are concerned to know of His adorable essence. "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one" (1 John 5:7). The perfections of Deity are attributed and ascribed, in various parts of the Scripture, to each of these Three. Each of them, therefore, is God; and yet we are sure, both from Scripture and reason, that there is, there can be, but one God. Thus far we can go safely; and that we can go no further, that our thoughts are lost and overwhelmed if we attempt to represent to ourselves how or in what manner three are one, and one are three, may be easily accounted for, if any just reason can be given why a worm cannot comprehend infinity. Let us first, if we can, account for the nature, essence, and properties of things with which, as to their effects, we are familiarly acquainted. Let us explain the growth of a blade of grass, or the virtues of the loadstone. Till we are able to do this, it becomes us to lay our hands upon our mouths, and our mouths in the dust. Far from attempting to explain the doctrine of the Trinity to my hearers, I rather wish to leave an impression upon your minds, that it is, to us, (and perhaps to the highest created intelligences,) incomprehensible. But if it be contained in the Scripture, (which I

must leave to your own consciences to determine in the sight of God,) it is thereby sufficiently proved; and humble faith requires no other proof.

Allow me to confirm my own sentiments, by and observation of a celebrated French * writer to the following purport:—"The whole difference, with respect to this subject, between the common people and the learned doctors, is, that while they are both equally ignorant, the ignorance of the people is modest and ingenuous, and they do not blush for being unable to see what God has thought fit to conceal. Whereas the ignorance of their teachers is proud and affected; they have recourse to scholastic distinctions, and abstract reasonings, that they may not be thought upon a level with the vulgar."

* Jakob Abbadie (1654?-1727).

The form of baptism prescribed by our Lord for the use of His Church, is thus expressed, "Baptizing them in the name of the Father , and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19). It is evident, by comparing this sentence with that which I before recited from the epistle of John, that the Word and the Son are synonymous terms, expressive of the same character. They are both the titles of MESSIAH. Of Him John spoke, when he said, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us;" and of Him God the Father said, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Had God spoken thus to an angel, it would have been in effect saying, Thou art the Word, which in the beginning was with God, and was God, by whom all things were made. But to which of all the angels would the great God use language like this?

Our Lord, in His conference with Nicodemus, was pleased to say, God so loved the world that He gave "His only begotten Son," etc. (John 3:16). It was undoubtedly His design, by this expression, to give to Nicodemus, and to us the highest idea possible of the love of God to sinners. He so loved the world beyond description or comparison, that He gave His only begotten Son. Surely, then, the gift spoken of must not be limited to the human nature only. This was not all that He gave. The human nature was the medium of the acts and sufferings of MESSIAH; but He who assumed it was the Word, who was before all, and by whom all things were

made. It is true the human nature was given, supernaturally formed by divine power, and born of a virgin. But He who was in the beginning God with God, was given to appear, obey, and suffer in the nature of man, for us and for our salvation. And to Him are ascribed the perfections and attributes of Deity; of which the highest angels are no more capable, than the worms which creep upon the earth.

I cannot, therefore, suppose, that the title Son of God, is merely a title of office, or belonging only to the nature which He assumed. But that MESSIAH is the Son of God, as He is God and man in one person. If the forming of a perfect and spotless man, like Adam when he was first created, could have effected our salvation, it would have been a great and undeserved mercy to have vouchsafed [graciously granted] the gift; but I think it would not have required such very strong language as the Scripture uses, in describing the gift of the Son of God. The God-man, the whole person of Christ, was sent, came forth from the Father. The manhood was the offering, but the Word of God, possessed of the perfections of Deity, was the altar necessary to sanctify the gift, and to give a value and efficacy to the atonement.

The term begotten, expresses with us the ground of relation between Father and Son, and upon which an only son is the heir of the father. I feel and confess myself to be at a loss here. I might take up your time, and perhaps conceal my own ignorance, by borrowing from the writings of wiser and better men than myself, a detail of what have been generally reputed the more prevailing orthodox sentiments on this subject. But I dare not go beyond my own ideas. I shall not, therefore, attempt to explain the phrase eternal generation, because I must acknowledge that I do not clearly understand it myself. Long before time began, the purpose of constituting the Mediator between God and sinners, was established in the Divine Counsels. With reference to this, He Himself speaks in the character of the Wisdom of God. "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. Then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him, rejoicing always before Him; rejoicing in the habitable parts of the

earth, and my delights were among the sons of men” (Proverbs 8:22, 31). If the Word of God had not engaged according to an everlasting and sure covenant, to assume our nature, and to accomplish our salvation, before the earth was formed, He would not have appeared afterwards; for we cannot with reason conceive of any new determinations arising in the mind of the infinite God; to whom, what we call the past and the future, are equally present. In this sense, (if the expression be proper to convey such a sense) I can conceive that He was the begotten Son of God from eternity. That is, set up and appointed from eternity for the office, nature, and work, by which, in the fullness of time, He was manifested to men. But if the terms, begotten, or eternal generation, be used to denote the manner of His eternal existence in Deity, I must be silent. I believe Him to be the eternal Son; I believe Him to be the eternal God. And I wish not to exercise my thoughts and enquiries more than is needful, in things which are too high for me.

The Scripture, in different places, evidently applies the purport of this phrase “I have begotten thee,” to transactions which took place in time, This Day, and particularly to two principal events.

1. His INCARNATION. Thus the angel said to Mary, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee” (Luke 1:35); therefore also “the holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.” So the Apostle, “In the fullness of time God sent forth His Son made of a woman” (Galatians 4:4). And in the passage we are next to consider, “When He bringeth His first-begotten into the world, He saith, and let all the angels of God worship Him” (Hebrews 1:6).

2. His RESURRECTION. To this purpose our text is quoted from the second Psalm. “The promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same to the children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again;” as it is also written in the second Psalm, “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee” (Acts 13:32, 33). And in another place He teaches us, that “He who was of the seed of David, according to the flesh, was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Romans 1:4).

After all, I would remind you, that the best knowledge of the doctrine of the person of Christ, that which affords life and comfort to the soul, is to be obtained, not so much by enquiry and study on our part, as by a gracious manifestation on His part. Prayer, attention to the great Teacher, a humble perusal of the Scripture, and a course of simple obedience to His known will, are the methods which He has prescribed for our growth in grace, and in the knowledge of Himself. Thus even babes are made wise; while they who are wise and prudent in their own sight, the more they endeavour to investigate and ascertain the sense of Scripture, are frequently involved more and more in perplexity. He has given a promise and direction for the encouragement of those who sincerely seek Him. “He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him” (John 14:21).

This is He with whom we have to do. In and by this Son of His love, we have access by faith unto God. Unworthy and helpless in ourselves, from hence we derive our plea; here we find a refuge; and on this we rest, “that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son;” who is so much “better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they” (Hebrews 1:4).

28. Messiah Worshipped By Angels

“Let all the angels of God worship Him” Hebrews 1:6.

Many of the Lord’s true servants, have been in a situation so nearly similar to that of Elijah, that like him they have been tempted to think they were left to serve the Lord alone (1 Kings 19:10). But God had then a faithful people, and He has so in every age. The preaching of the Gospel may be compared to a standard erected, to which they repair, and thereby become known to each other, and more exposed to the notice and observation of the world. But we hope there are always many who are enlightened by His Word and Holy Spirit, and training up in the life of faith and holiness, known and dear to God, though they have little advantage from public ordinances, and perhaps no opportunity of conversing

with those who are like-minded with themselves. But even though the number of those who visibly profess the Gospel of the Grace of God were much smaller than it is, we need not be disheartened. If our sight could pierce into the invisible world, we should be satisfied that there are more with us than against us (2 Kings 6:16). And such power is attributed to faith. It is the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1), because it receives the testimony of Scripture, and rests upon it as a certainty, and a demonstration; requiring no other proof, either of doctrines or facts, than that they are contained in the sure Word of God. True Christians, therefore, are comforted by the assurance they have, that their Saviour, the Lord of their hearts, is not so neglected and despised, nor His character so misunderstood and misrepresented in yonder land of light, as in this dark and degenerate world. Though too many here, like Festus, treat it as a matter of great indifference, whether Jesus be dead or alive (Acts 25:19); and ask them with a taunt, What is your Beloved more than another beloved? they are not ashamed, for they know whom they have believed; and if men will not join with them in admiring and praising Him, they are sure that they have the concurrence of far superior beings. By faith they behold Him seated upon a throne of glory, adored by all holy and happy intelligent creatures, whether angels, principalities, powers or dominions. And when He was upon earth, in a state of humiliation, though despised and rejected of men, He was seen and acknowledged by angels. Their warrant and ours is the same. He is proposed to us, as the object of our supreme love and dependence; and as we are enjoined to kiss the Son and pay Him homage, so when God brought Him into the world, He said, "Let all the angels of God worship Him."

Though the bringing of MESSIAH, the first or only begotten into the world, may, as I have observed already, be applied to His incarnation, or to His resurrection, I apprehend it rather designs the whole of His exhibition in the flesh. At His ascension, having finished the work appointed for Him to do, He was solemnly invested with authority and glory, and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. But in His lowest, no less than in His exalted state, the dignity of His divine person is the same yesterday, today,

and for ever. He was always the proper object of worship. It was agreeable to right, and to the nature of things, and a command worthy of God, that all the angels of God should worship Him.

The holy angels that excel in strength (Psalm 103:20), always do His commandments, hearkening to the voice of His word. We might be certain, therefore, that this highest and most comprehensive command a creature is capable of receiving from his Creator, is fulfilled by them, even if he had no express information of the fact. But we have repeated assurances to this purpose. Thus Isaiah, when he saw His glory and spoke of Him, “saw the seraphim standing; each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, saying, Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts, and the whole earth is full of His glory” (Isaiah 6:2, 3). I see not how the force of the argument, arising from this passage, can be evaded, to prove that MESSIAH is the proper object of the most solemn adoration which creatures can offer to the Most High; unless any were hardy enough to assert, either that the Prophet was himself imposed upon, or has imposed upon us by a false vision; or that the Apostle John was mistaken when he applied this representation to Jesus Christ (John 12:41). But the Apostle likewise had a vision of the same effect; in which, while His people, redeemed from the earth by His blood, cast their crowns at His feet, the angels were also represented as joining in the chorus of their praises, saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing” (Revelation 5:12). In brief, He is the Lord of angels. The heavenly hosts waited upon Him, and sang His praises at His birth (Luke 2:13, 14). Angels ministered unto Him in the wilderness. And they are so entirely His servants, that at His command they are sent forth to minister unto, and attend upon, His believing people. “Are they not all ministering [worshipping] spirits” (Hebrews 1:14), adoring the divine Majesty, yet “sent forth to minister [to the service] to the heirs of salvation.” He is likewise the Head of angels, though they are not in the same near relation to Him, as the sinners whom He has redeemed with His blood; for He

took on Him their nature. There was no redemption appointed for the angels who kept not their first habitation. But the confirmation of those who continue in holiness and happiness, is in and through Him. “For all things both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, are gathered together in one” [reduced under one head into one body] “in Him” (Ephesians 1:10). And they are therefore styled in contradistinction from the others, The elect angels (1 Timothy 5:21). He is their life, and strength, and joy, as He is ours, though they cannot sing the whole song of His people. It is appropriate to the saved amongst men to say, This God shines glorious in our nature, He loved us, and gave Himself for us.

Here then, as I have mentioned, is a pattern and encouragement for us. The angels, the whole host of heaven, worship Him. He is Lord of all. We in this distant world have heard the report of His glory, have felt our need of such a Saviour, and are, in some degree, witnesses and proofs of His ability and willingness to save. He lived, He died, He arose, He reigns for us. Therefore humbly depending upon His promised grace, without which we can do nothing, we are resolved, that whatever others do, we must, we will worship Him, with the utmost powers of our souls. It is our determination and our choice, not only to praise and honour Him with our lips, but to devote ourselves to His service, to yield ourselves to His disposal, to entrust our all to His care, and to place our whole happiness in His favour. I hope, in speaking thus, I speak the language of many of your hearts.

Some reflections easily offer from this subject, with which I shall close it.

1. They who love Him, may rejoice in the thoughts of His glory. They have deeply sympathized with Him, when reading the history of His humiliation and passion. It has not been a light concern to them, that He endured agonies, that He was rejected, reviled, scourged and slain. He who suffered these things was their best friend, their beloved Lord, and He suffered for their sakes. In the glass of His Word, and by the light of His Holy Spirit, He has been set forth as crucified before their eyes. And they have been crucified with Him, and have had fellowship with Him in His death. From hence they derive their indignation against sin, and

their indifference to the world, which treated Him thus. But now He is no more a man of sorrows; His head, which was once crowned with thorns, is now crowned with glory; His face, which was defiled with spittle, shines like the sun; His hands, which were manacled, wield the sceptre of universal government; and, instead of being surrounded with insulting men, He is now encircled by adoring angels. Therefore they rejoice with joy unspeakable, expecting soon to see Him as He is, and to be with Him for ever, according to the gracious promises He has made them, and the tenor of His prevailing intercession for them.

2. What an honour does His exaltation and glory, reflect upon His faithful followers? The world that rejected him pays little regard to them. They are slighted, or scorned, or pitied, and, in proportion as they manifest His Spirit, experience a degree of the treatment which He met with. They are accounted visionaries or hypocrites. Many of them are great sufferers. And few of them, comparatively, are distinguished among men by abilities, influence or wealth. They are strangers and pilgrims upon earth. Yet this God is their God. He who is worshipped by angels is not ashamed to call them brethren (Hebrews 2:11). They are nearly [closely] related to Him who sitteth upon the Throne. And He is pleased to account them His portion, and His jewels. It doth not yet appear what they shall be. But the day is coming when their mourning shall be ended, their characters vindicated, and they shall shine like the sun in the Kingdom of their Lord. They shall stand before Him with confidence, and not be ashamed when He appears. Then shall the difference between the righteous and the wicked clearly be discerned. In that day the righteous shall say, “Lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the LORD, we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation” (Isaiah 25:9). While the others, however once admired or feared by mortals, the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, no less than those of inferior rank, shall tremble, shall wish in vain to conceal themselves, and shall say to the “mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne, for the great day of His wrath is come” (Revelation 6:15, 16). In that hour, the striking description

in the Book of Wisdom (which, though apocryphal, is in this passage quite consonant with the declarations of authentic Scripture) will assuredly be realized. “Then shall the righteous man stand in great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted him, and made no account of his labours. When they see it, they shall be troubled with terrible fear, and shall be amazed at the strangeness of his salvation, so far beyond all that they looked for. And they repenting, and groaning for anguish of spirit, shall say within themselves, This was he whom we had sometimes in derision, and a proverb of reproach. We fools counted his life madness, and his end to be without honour. How is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot is among the saints!” (Wisdom 5:1-5).

3. We may well admire the condescension of this great King, who humbles Himself even to notice the worship of heaven; that He should look upon the worship of sinful men with acceptance, and permit such worms as we are to take His holy name upon our polluted lips. If we know ourselves, we must be conscious of such defects and defilement attending our best services, as are sufficient to affect us with shame and humiliation. What wanderings of imagination, what risings of evil thoughts, what unavoidable though unallowable workings of self-complacency, mingle with our prayers and praises, and disturb us in our secret retirements, in the public assembly, and even at the table of the Lord! I hope we know enough of this, to be sensible that we need forgiveness, not only for our positive transgressions of His will, but for our sincerest, warmest and most enlarged attempts to render Him glory due to His name! Yet we are incompetent and partial judges of ourselves; we know but little of the evil of our own hearts, and have but a slight sense of the malignity of that evil which is with our observation. But the Lord searches the heart and the reins, to Him all things are “naked,” without covering, “open,” without concealment (Hebrews 4:13). He understands our thoughts afar off, and beholds us exactly as we are. Our dislike of sin is proportional to our attainments in holiness, which are exceedingly short of the standard. But He is infinitely holy, and therefore evil is unspeakably hateful to Him.—How vile and abominable therefore must our sins appear in His

view! Indeed, if He was strict to mark what is amiss, we could not stand a moment before Him. Nor would it be agreeable to His majesty and purity to accept any services or prayers at our hands, if we presumed to offer them in our own name. But now there is an atonement provided, and a way of access to the throne of Grace, sprinkled with the blood which speaks better things than the blood of Abel. Now that we have an Advocate, Intercessor, and High Priest, to bear the iniquity of our holy things, we are accepted in the Beloved. Now the great and holy God vouchsafes [graciously grants] to admit such sinners into communion with Himself. He invites us to draw near with boldness; and because of ourselves we know not how to pray as we ought, He favours us with the influence of His Holy Spirit (Romans 8:26). It is a great instance of the power of faith, that, remembering what we have been, and feeling what we are, and having some right apprehension of Him with whom we have to do, we are enabled to approach Him with confidence, and to open our hearts to Him, with greater liberty than we can use to our dearest earthly friends. His people know by many infallible proofs, that His presence is with them in their secret retirements, and in their public assemblies, according to His promise. He hears and answers their prayers, He revives their spirits, He renews their strength; He gives them reason to say that, a day in His courts is better than a thousand of the world's days. Such are their expectations, and such, in the exercise of faith, is their experience. They worship Him whom the angels worship; and they know that, unworthy and defective as they are, their worship is no less acceptable to Him than that of the angels in glory, by virtue of their relation to Him, who is Lord both of angels and men.

4. Hence we may infer the necessity of that change of heart, which the Scripture expresses by a new birth, a new life, a new creation, and other representations, which denote it can only be effected by divine power. Till we are the subjects of this operation, we are incapable of enjoying or even of seeing the Kingdom of God (John 3:3). Though to outward appearance the congregation before me seem all to be serious and attentive, as if

engaged in the same design, and animated with the same desire and hope, He to whom our hearts are known, doubtless observes a great difference. Some of you, though custom or a regard to your connections bring you here, yet must be sensible that this is not your chosen ground, and that these are not the subjects that give you pleasure. We preach Christ Jesus and Him crucified—Christ Jesus the Lord. The Lord sees, though I cannot, the indispositions of your heart towards Him. You are soon weary and uneasy. And you wish to throw the blame of your uneasiness upon the preacher. You regard his method, his manner, his expressions, with no friendly intention, in hopes of noticing something that may seem to justify your dislike; and a sermon, not very long in itself, is to you very tedious. We wish well to your souls, we study to find out acceptable words; for though we dare not trifle with or flatter you, we are unwilling to give you just offence. But if you will be faithful to yourselves, you may perceive that it is not so much the length or the manner, as the subject of our sermons that disgusts you. You would, perhaps, hear with more attention and patience, if we spoke less of Him whom the angels worship. There are assemblies more suited to your taste, and there are public speakers to whom you can probably afford a willing ear, for a much longer time than we detain you. Because there you are at home. You are of the world, and you love the world. The amusements, the business, the conversations, and the customs of the world, suit your inclination. But here you are not, if I may so speak, in your proper element: and yet it may be, there are persons in the same seat with you, who think themselves happy to hear, what you hear with indifference or disgust. If you knew your state as a sinner, your need of a Saviour, and the excellence and glory of the Saviour whom we preach to you, you likewise would be pleased; and a preacher of very moderate powers would fix your attention, and gain your esteem, if he preached this Gospel. But what ideas do you form of a future state? Surely, you cannot suppose that in the eternal world you will meet with any of the poor expedients you have recourse to now, for filling up your time, which otherwise would hang heavy upon your hands. To

attempt a detail of the round of vanities, which constitute a worldly life, would be unsuitable to the dignity of the pulpit. Let it suffice to say, that death will remove you from them all. If they are now necessary to what you account your happiness, must you not of course be miserable without them? If you believe that you shall exist hereafter, do you not desire heaven? But such a heaven as the Word of God describes could not afford you happiness, unless your mind be previously changed and disposed to relish it. Neither the employment nor the company of heaven would be pleasing to you. It is a state where all the inhabitants unite in admiring and adoring Him who died upon the cross. If this subject is displeasing to you here, it would be much more so there. Heaven itself would be a hell to an un-humbled, and unholy soul. Consider this seriously, while there is time to seek His face; and tremble at the thoughts of being cut off by death in your present state, insensible as you are of who He is, and what He has done for sinners. May He enlighten your understanding, and enable you to see things pertaining to your true peace, before they are for ever hidden from your eyes.

The twelfth of twenty booklets.

